

Organic Perspectives

Special Edition: Legislative Update

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Next Newsletter in July 2003

This edition is dedicated to recent news on legislation, international organic issues, and markets. For further information, contact Stephanie Riddick, (202) 205-3771, Stephanie.Riddick@fas.usda.gov.

Rep. Farr Hosts First Meeting Of Congressional Organic Caucus

On Thursday, April 10, House Representative Sam Farr (CA-17) initiated the Organic Caucus meeting in Washington D.C. The new Caucus includes the following members: Rep. Farr, along with co-chairs Representatives James Walsh (NY-25), Ron Kind (WI-03), Wayne Gilchrest (MD-01), Peter DeFazio (OR-04) and Amo Houghton (NY-29).

According to Farr the meeting was held to, "discuss ways of enhancing the standard to make it workable for producers and consumers." The meeting featured a panel of experts from USDA, Cornell University, and the organic industry.

For more information on the Organic Caucus see <http://www.house.gov/farr/> or contact Sarah Rosen at 202-225-2861.

USDA Publishes Amendments to List of Substances in Organic Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a proposed rule April 16, 2003 that will amend USDA's National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances ([National List](#)). The amendments reflect recommendations submitted by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) from June 6, 2000, through October 20, 2002. The proposed rule adds 10 substances to the National List, revises the annotations of two substances and makes technical revisions to clarify specific sections of the National List and to reflect previous NOSB recommendations. The National List, which is part of the National Organic Standards, is developed by the NOSB in consultation with outside experts. The National List identifies substances that are allowed and prohibited in organic production and handling operations.

All comments to the proposed rule will be made available for viewing on the National Organic Program homepage at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

Congress Repeals Section 771 of the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2002

On April 12, 2003, Congress repealed a provision of the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2002 that prohibited USDA funds from being used to enforce the requirement that livestock producers feed their livestock organically produced feed.

For more information visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.



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New Internet Safety System for Organic Products

The discussion on the product safety of organic food, which was intensified by the nitrofen scandal, is bearing fruit. The conference of the inspection bodies has now set up an Internet database for the trade. The Internet directory is intended to provide companies and certification bodies with rapid information on whether a company is registered for the inspection procedure as per Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91. The directory is based on data made available by the responsible certification body. Confirmation can be called up in standard form and simplifies quality assurance for the trading partners. Updating the database records at least every quarter of a year offers more recent information than copies of the previous year's certificates.

(Source: BioFach Newsletter - <http://www.biofach.de>.)

France: FNAB Calls for 15 Percent Organic Farming by 2010

At a meeting of the French organic association FNAB, the organic farmers called for efforts to achieve a target of 15 percent for the organic farming area in France by 2010. The present organic share of the agricultural area is only 1.7 percent. The FNAB members considered a list of requirements on how this ambitious objective could be achieved. For example, European grants should be harmonized and a bonus funded as recognition of the environment-friendly and socially compatible methods of organic farming.

(Source: BioFach Newsletter - <http://www.biofach.de>.)

Minnesota Organizes State and Federal Partnership to Serve Organic Farmers, Consumers

As the U.S. leader in the production of organic corn and soybeans, Minnesota ranks 6th among the states for organic acreage. Even as the Minnesota organic agriculture sector has grown over the past few years, many believe there is room for even more growth.

In response to this trend, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with four state and federal partners on April 21st. The MOU outlines ways in which the organizations can cooperate to increase productivity, profitability and economic opportunities

for the organic agriculture industry of Minnesota. This partnership, the first of its kind in the U.S., brings together U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA – Farm Service, the University of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

To read the press release on this partnership, visit <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/newsreleases/2003news/03apr21a.htm>.

Global Organic Update

European Union: The European Action Plan Internet consultation received 1,136 comments on the proposal for the European plan for organic food and farming. The majority of the respondents were from France, Austria, and Italy. Approximately half of the respondents were consumers, but also included farmers, traders, food processors, national, and international organizations.

(Source: <http://www.organicstandard.com>)

European Union: Eurobarometer 58.0 on "Europeans and Biotechnology in 2002" found that overall support for Genetically Modified (GM) food is only found in Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Finland. Most Europeans feel GM food is "of little value and dangerous for society. The full Eurobarometer report can be read online at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/barometer/>.

Africa: The International Federations of Organic Agriculture Movements will soon establish a new Organic Service Center for Africa. A coordinator will be located in a major African Sub-Saharan city. (Source: <http://www.ota.com>)

Germany: A German publishing company has published a guide of organic restaurants. "Fitgood Bio-Restaurants" shows the variety of organic catering activities, from catering and the snackbar in the organic supermarket to fine restaurants and hotel catering. There are 210 entries, including 45 new additions. The guide can be found in German bookstores. (Source: BioFach Newsletter - <http://www.biofach.de>.)

Malaysia: The Malaysian Department of Agriculture will soon issue new organic farming guidelines. The "Organic Farming Certification System" seeks to prevent abuse. (Source: <http://www.organicmonitor.com>)

Ethiopia: The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture announced it has completed draft rules and regulation on organic agricultural products. The objective of the new rules is to increase Ethiopia's international participation in the organic market. (Source: <http://www.organicmonitor.com>)

United States: According to a new poll conducted for the Organic Trade Association (OTA) by RoperASW, a majority (51%) of U.S. women have seen the USDA organic seal where they do most of their food shopping. (Press release available at <http://www.ota.com/news2003.htm>)

USDA News

FAS Organic Products Web Site

- The FAS Organic Products Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/organics/organics.html> offers constant updates in the "Hot Markets" section. Visit the page frequently for the latest news!
- The most recent FAS international report on organics markets and issues includes:
 - [Belgium-Luxembourg Closes Its Organic Supermarket Bio Square](#)
- USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has a special [Organic, Natural and Wellness Buyer Alert](#) newsletter highlighting exhibitors from the recent Natural Products Expo West held in Anaheim, CA.

Organic Food Continuing Education Program

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) will hold an Organic Food Continuing Education Program on June 2 - 3 in Schaumburg/Woodfield, Illinois (USA). It will cover all aspects of 7CFR National Organic Program requirements for the production and processing of certified organic food products and ingredients. This program is designed for those who wish to get a better understanding about the principles of organics to enable them to succeed in the marketplace.

More information is available at <http://www.ift.org/education/contedu/organic.shtml>.

All Things Organic is Here !

The USDA's National Organic Program and Foreign Agricultural Service staff updated the industry on international organic trade, current issues and opportunities at the All Things Organic Show. The show, held in Austin, Texas May 14 to 17, had representatives from 44 states and 25 countries.

For more information on the show and the Organic Trade Association visit <http://www.ota.com>.



Upcoming Events

For a complete list of events, visit the FAS Organic Products Web site "[Calendar of Events for the Organic Industry](#)".

International

- **August 18-22** – 6th IFOAM Asia Conference, Yangpyung, Korea. For more information visit <http://www.ifoam.org>.
- **October 9-11** – BioFach Japan, Tokyo, Japan. For more information visit <http://www.nuernbergglobalfairs.com/va/BioFachJapan2003/e/uebersicht.html>.
- **October 18-20, 2003** – NATEXPO (formerly the DIETETIC), Organic Health and Dietetic Trade Show, Paris, France. Contact information: Sylvie Dalouche, (33-1) 49 09 6068, sdalouche@comexpo-paris.com.
- **December 3-5 – NEW DATE!** - Natural Products Expo Asia, Hong Kong. For more information visit <http://www.naturalproductsasia.com>.

Domestic

- **May 14-16, 2003**: All Things Organic. Austin, TX. More information is available on the Organic Trade Association (OTA) Web site at <http://www.ota.com>.
- **June 27-29** – National Nutritional Foods Association (NNFA) Market Place 2003, Las Vegas, NV. For more information visit <http://www.nnfa.org>.
- **September 4-7** – Natural Products Expo East (Organic Products Expo – Biofach America), Washington, DC. For more information visit <http://www.naturalproductsexpo.com>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- ❑ **FAS, AgExport Services Division's Organic Page** <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/organics/organics.html>
- ❑ **National Organic Program** Web site - <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>

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Editor's Note: As publishers of *Organic Perspectives*, USDA-FAS AgExport Services continuously strives to maintain a partnership with the organic food community by sharing information and providing export assistance through our many export program services. For more information on how we might support your company in establishing opportunities abroad, please contact us at (202) 205-3771.